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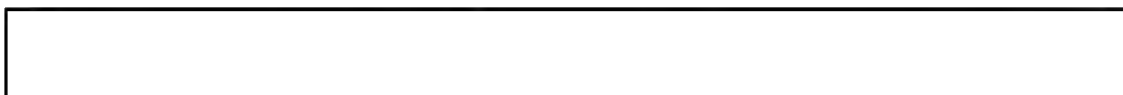
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【South Vietnam: Ground fighting picked up throughout much of South Vietnam on 21-22 April, largely because of aggressive allied efforts to seek out the enemy. The Communists are still generally trying to avoid major contact, while continuing to chip away at allied positions with mortar and rocket fire.

The most significant Communist-initiated attack occurred just below the Demilitarized Zone; an enemy force struck a US Marine position and broke through the camp's defenses. Eight Americans were killed and 25 wounded.

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Korea: Peking's belated comment on the shoot-down of the US aircraft has avoided giving direct support to Pyongyang.

On 21 April Peking broke its week-old silence over the incident with an official news release attacking Moscow's "collusion" with the US following the shootdown. While denouncing the Soviets' assistance and cooperation during the past week as "active service provided to US imperialism," the article cited a "news report" source stating that the US plane "intruded" into North Korean airspace. The dispatch made no mention, however, of who shot down the plane.

Peking's statement contrasts with its announcement last year concerning the seizure of the Pueblo. At that time, China promised "firm support" for Pyongyang's "just stand." Sino - North Korean relations have been poor for several years, and Peking's ambivalent response may reflect a decision to withhold significant propaganda coverage of the incident, at least until the North Koreans make further statements.

In Japan, opposition parties have shifted their attacks from the plane incident itself to the US naval deployment. Socialist, Communist, and other opposition Diet members belabored Foreign Minister Aichi yesterday with demands that the government ask the US to "stop raising tension in the Sea of Japan." Aichi turned aside these demands as well as opposition insistence that any port calls by task force units be made subject to the prior consultations clause of the US-Japan security treaty.

Japanese news media have also reacted strongly against the US naval buildup in the Sea of Japan.

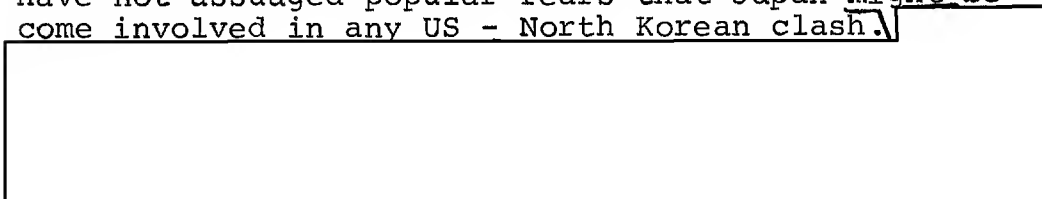
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One leading newspaper questioned US intentions, and observed that the task force was larger than was needed for protecting reconnaissance aircraft. Assurances from official spokesmen that the escort aircraft would not be flown from US bases in Japan have not assuaged popular fears that Japan might become involved in any US - North Korean clash.

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Arab States - Israel: The scale of the exchanges between Israeli and Jordanian forces along the Jordan River is growing.

Yesterday's strike against Egyptian radar sites on the East Bank was Israel's third major air attack this year against targets in Jordan. It followed by one day the year's biggest artillery duel across the Jordan River cease-fire line. Although the Israelis have stated that the attack was "a partial answer" to Egyptian artillery bombardments across the Suez Canal, the principal motive may have been to deprive the Egyptians of the ability to monitor Israeli air operations in southern Israel.

The Israelis have claimed that Iraqi artillery stationed in Jordan shelled Israeli targets during the firing on Monday. Israel may be building a case for a major strike at Iraqi forces in Jordan in line with the "active defense" policy that the Israelis announced earlier this year.

On 21 April, Jordanian Prime Minister Rifai told the British, French, Soviet, and US representatives in Amman that if the Israelis continued to hit civilian targets, as they had on that and the previous day, Jordan would be forced to strike at Israeli civilian areas. He claimed that Jordanian forces are capable of hitting Israeli villages but up to now have observed orders to fire only at military targets.



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USSR - Eastern Europe: The CEMA summit beginning today in Moscow probably will present a facade of unity but accomplish little of major importance.

Most of the East European countries believe that CEMA as presently organized is unable to meet the technological, trade, and monetary requirements of its member states. Certain East European party and government leaders advocate major changes in economic relations among CEMA's members. Recent CEMA meetings, however, have been increasingly acrimonious, and this summit is unlikely to resolve basic differences.

For political reasons, the USSR believes that the organization should foster greater economic cohesiveness among its members, but Rumania, at the other end of the scale, is extremely sensitive to any move that might challenge its national sovereignty. Hungary and Poland have advanced relatively far-reaching integration proposals, while the other European members--Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Bulgaria--support various forms of increased cooperation in certain areas.

Moscow's primary motivation in calling the CEMA summit meeting probably is to make a show of political solidarity. Thus it is likely that serious disagreements will be papered over for the sake of public appearances. Because this is the first gathering of Communist leaders since last week's political changes in Czechoslovakia, the Soviets may take the opportunity to brief their allies on the current Czechoslovak situation.

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Venezuela: Opposition to the Caldera government's pacification program is crystallizing in some political and military circles.

On 18 April the government issued a decree pardoning 20 extreme leftists who had been charged with crimes against national security since 1962. This action has set off sharp criticism from the opposition Democratic Action Party and [redacted] military officers that the government is moving too fast on too many fronts to pacify the country. Fears of this kind had already been partially aroused by the Caldera government's moves toward re-establishing diplomatic relations with Eastern Europe and the USSR, legalizing the Communist Party, and negotiating with insurgents for a cease-fire accord.

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[The military's concern arises in part from a belief that the Communist Party, despite its renunciation of armed struggle and its reasonable public posture, may be continuing to build a covert military capability as insurance against the possibility that the party's strategy might shift. The hard-line Communist faction is, in fact, developing contingency plans along this line.]

[Some of the criticisms of Caldera from the Democratic Action Party is probably only partisan sniping, but the concern of the military, according to US Embassy officers, is real. The military can be expected to keep a close watch on further moves by the government.] [redacted]

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Czechoslovakia: Student sit-ins yesterday spread throughout western Czechoslovakia and now involve an estimated 20,000 youths in 20 universities. More students may join them today. There are no indications, however, that the students intend more demonstrative protests. Moreover, the rank-and-file young workers--who are politically aligned with the students--apparently have decided to refrain from participating in the student strikes.

[REDACTED]

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Peru: An illegal strike against a US mining company threatens to evolve into a broader labor dispute that could intensify anti-American sentiment. After unions at two of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company's installations rejected a Labor Ministry order to resume work, the company fired 12 union leaders on 21 April. Although the company's action is within the law under these circumstances, it is likely to provoke an angry response that could spread to employees of other US-owned companies. So far the government has hesitated to force the men to resume work, because this could be construed as capitulation to an American company.

[REDACTED]

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Dominican Republic: President Balaguer unexpectedly dismissed the chief of National Police and his top assistant last weekend. Heavy-handed police methods had been under increasing criticism, most recently after security forces overreacted to alleged student provocations and attacked a crowd of several thousand students, injuring two university officials. The dismissal satisfies the key demand of the major opposition party, which withdrew from congress last week. The move has probably brought the President some respite from political attack, but it is unlikely to quiet opposition demands for long.

[REDACTED]

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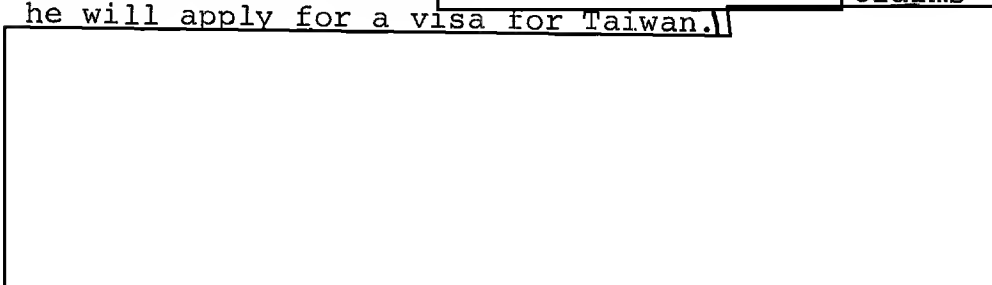
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Nationalist China: In line with recent moves by Taipei to broaden contacts with the USSR, a Nationalist Chinese delegation is scheduled to attend an international tourist conference in Bulgaria next month. Taipei's Foreign Ministry has confirmed this to US Embassy officials, but has specified that "only technicians," who will not visit other Communist states, are involved. This will be the first visit by a Nationalist Chinese group to Eastern Europe since the Nationalist government moved to Taiwan.

The Foreign Ministry, at the same time, has avoided a direct denial of press reports that Victor Louis, the quasi official Soviet journalist who toured Taiwan late last October, would make a second visit. (Louis has been issued a one-month visa to visit Japan, where [redacted] claims he will apply for a visa for Taiwan.)

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